

## **MINORITY BUSINESS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

### **PURPOSE**

To increase the opportunity for minority firms to sell their products and services to the State of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Act 390 says that a certified minority business is eligible for a 5-percent bid preference. This means that a certified bidder must be within 5 percent of the lowest qualified responsible bidder. The Wisconsin Department of Administration monitors state agency compliance with the purchasing guidelines established for minority business procurement through this Act.

The Department of Commerce (COMMERCE) certifies firms for eligibility to participate in the state's minority business bid preference program.

The bid preference program does not apply to printing firms, but they are encouraged to become certified so that agencies can procure printing orders from minority vendors to meet their purchasing goal.

### **BENEFITS**

- ◆ At least 5 percent of state purchasing and contracting under the 1983 Wisconsin Act 390 is targeted for certified minority-owned businesses.
- ◆ Certified minority-owned firms are eligible for a low-bid waiver as long as its bid is no higher than 5 percent of the lowest qualified responsible bidder.
- ◆ Certified minority-owned firms are eligible for technical and marketing assistance, including participation in Marketplace, which is a statewide minority business marketing conference sponsored by COMMERCE.
- ◆ Certified minority-owned firms are eligible to be listed in the State of Wisconsin's Directory of Minority-Owned Businesses, which is circulated to corporate buyers throughout the United States and to state purchasing agents.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To qualify, a minority-owned business (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation or joint venture) must meet the following criteria:

- ◆ The business must be at least 51 percent owned, controlled, and actively managed by Native American, Black, Hispanic, Asian Indian, Asian Pacific, Aleut, Eskimo, or Native Hawaiian minority persons.
- ◆ The firm must serve a "useful business function" and have customers other than the State of Wisconsin.
- ◆ The business must be at least one (1) year old under current ownership.

### **TERMS OF CERTIFICATION**

Minority business certifications expire annually on December 31 and require an annual renewal. In November, each firm will receive a brief renewal form to use in updating their company profile and noting any changes to the business structure.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Interested firms complete an application for certification (DD400) and provide requested documentation (ethnic status of minority owner(s), financial records, ongoing business activity, etc.). COMMERCE will conduct a verification site visit. The firm must also complete the State of Wisconsin Bidder's List Application.

### **WHERE TO APPLY:**

For information about the application process, contact: Department of Commerce, Bureau of Minority Business Development, P.O. Box 7970, Madison, WI 53707; 608/267-9550.